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America! To thine own self
be true. Justice with mercy

[New York]

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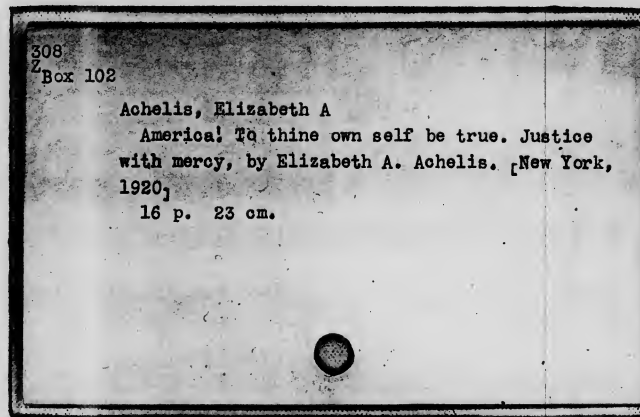
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AMERICA!
—
TO THINE OWN SELF
BE TRUE
—
JUSTICE WITH MERCY

By
ELIZABETH A. ACHELIS

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Box 102

*To all free, law-abiding
and loyal citizens of the
United States of America*

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BY ELIZABETH A. ACHELIS

FOREWORD

THESE three little essays, as their respective dates show, were written at different times, and not until the last one was completed did I conceive of printing them together. This was done and circulated privately. I now believe, however, that the time has come to bring these essays before my fellow citizens, in the hope that thereby they may be helped a little toward forming their own conclusions. The more angles from which one can view any subject the more clearly does that subject become.

I deeply regret that the League of Nations was ever incorporated in the Peace Treaty of Versailles, and in this country was brought into the field of political conflict. It is much too important, much too vital an issue for America's future. Now it is up to us citizens to oppose or accept this League of Nations Covenant as our individual consciences direct, and we honestly believe is best. If our decision is made in that spirit America's future will be safe for many years to come.

E. A. A.

*New York City,
September 30, 1920.*

AMERICA!

IN 1918 I wrote this article, with some slight changes and in the form of a letter, to the Liberty Loan Committee; it applies as well now as it did then.

In view of the coming Fourth Liberty Loan Campaign in September, it may help the Liberty Loan Committee and its co-workers to recall a few historical facts to their hearers and readers which cannot fail but make this campaign the most successful one of all. We Americans should be proud and thankful for this opportunity and privilege to give loyally and cheerfully, and to support honorably our country in every way, to bring to her and her Allies the victory and peace which we so earnestly desire.

The high motive and spirit which inspired America to enter this world war are the same as personified in Washington and Lincoln, and which so splendidly bore their fruit under William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, and are now being carried on by President Woodrow Wilson.

Noble achievements done in one's lifetime often carry more weight than great deeds of a glorious past, and it is our actions and diplomatic dealings of twenty years ago which I wish to recall to my fellow countrymen and countrywomen, and which were at the time, still are, and always should remain a great inspiration. Our future will be safe if we follow in the same path. For it is the coming of peace—which everyone hopes is not far off—followed by the delicate and difficult reconstruction period, that is going to be the true test of America and of democracy.

What were our acts twenty years ago?

In 1898, within the memory of almost every one of us, we entered upon a war to save a crushed little country

from tyrannical Spain and her cruel representative, Gen. Weyler. After a short conflict, we fortunately won, with the result that Cuba now is a free, self-governed nation, living in peace and prosperity. Our action and the promise of independence to Cuba were little understood at the time—least of all by Germany, who could not comprehend such altruistic motives in political and diplomatic dealings. We splendidly fulfilled our promise, however, and kept true to our ideas of humanity, the rights of all, and opportunities for self-government. It was a new step in international diplomacy and America accomplished it.

Then, too, what nation upon receiving as conquest of war some foreign lands—in this case the Philippine Islands—would have paid a sum of money for it, whereby the victorious nation became its rightful and lawful possessor—but America! Twenty million dollars was the price she paid to Spain, with the added promise to the Filipinos that after the necessary education and knowledge in civic affairs had been attained the Islands would be returned to them as the original and rightful owners.

What nation at the time of the Boxer uprising in China, in which England, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Russia and Japan, with the United States, had helped to crush that rebellion, firmly refused to allow any territory to be taken from China—but America! Courageously and alone she stood for "China for the Chinese" and the "Open Door" policy. In this act, President McKinley was most ably assisted by his Secretary of State, John Hay, and America won.

But the most wonderful act of all was this: What nation, when all the nations which had taken part in this suppression had received an indemnity for their losses incurred, returned the indemnity money to China—but America! This noble disinterestedness and true friendship so impressed China that she reciprocated in full by laying aside this amount of money, with which she is now sending her young people to the United States for education and the study of our ideals and our government.

How unparalleled, how uplifting and inspiring was this new kind of diplomacy!

It is these historical facts of our immediate past, direct results of our aspirations (not visionary dreams of a democracy beautiful in theory, impractical in execution) that must act as inspiration, strength, and hope to every one of us now and give us a thrill of thankfulness, and also humble us at the wonderful inheritance that is ours. Thank God, the same spirit is with us still; first in the acts of mercy and helpfulness that we brought to Belgium and France, which later on culminated in our openly avowing the cause of the Allies.

All hail to America, land of such high ideals, land of such noble achievements, land of such wonderful opportunities! May her voice always be heard on the side of right, of justice seasoned with mercy, of brotherhood to all!

August 14, 1918.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE!

AMERICA stands at the crossways. Which road shall she take? She has always held a unique position in the world; her strength has always been more on the moral and human side than on the physical, scientific, and intellectual side; her voice has always been lifted up for right above expediency, for principle rather than for gain. Now she has come to the most vital crisis in her career. What is to be her choice? Let us see.

Let us compare America to the story of a young child and her parents, older brothers and sisters. The child suddenly finds herself grown to maturity. For the first time she has taken an active part in a great struggle in which almost every member of her family has participated on one side or the other. She has been on the side of right and has won. Meanwhile the family has awakened to the strength and importance of this, their young child, and they desire to bind the child permanently to them; whereby they can assure to themselves her help and strength in all the future difficulties and problems that may arise. The child rebels. In her innermost feelings and intuitions she wants to keep her independence, desires to remain true to her own ideals, inspirations and principles, wants to retain her freedom of choice. In one word, desires to be free, and not bound. Two voices speak within her: the one says, "To thine own self be true;" the other, "Your duty is to others." The child is much disturbed. She meditates and ponders, reasons and discusses, and is divided within herself. The day arrives when she must make her decision. She is torn between her inner feelings and the wishes of her family. The child is an emotional one, full of sympathy, very unselfish and generous. Through an abnormal sense of duty and loyalty to her family, she ig-

nores self, consents to their wishes, and binds herself legally and morally to them forever.

Almost immediately difficulties arise. This brother wants her help on his side, that sister for her side. The parents, too, affirm that as their child is their offspring, she owes loyalty to them. The child, in its generousness, unselfishness and sympathy, endeavors to help all. She will show no partiality. She is tossed hither and thither; she gives all her aid, all her strength, to bring about harmony. But there seem to be no end to the petty jealousies and misunderstandings. Her pledge, however, has been given, and she will not break it. She truly becomes the burden bearer of all, and gradually grows weaker and weaker. Her own work and the children of her own ideals and thoughts are pushed aside. Inwardly, she is in a ferment; her body rebels at the constant suppressions and repressions and demands made upon her. Slowly she awakens to the fact that she has become a slave to her family; that she has lost her liberty. Gone is her wealth, her vitality, her clearness and independence of thought. She is in despair. She struggles vainly to regain her lost freedom, but health and courage fail her, and so she gradually succumbs, content to lead an anæmic, negligible life. The fine, young, virile child—so full of opportunities and promise—has become impotent. She has failed in her divine mission.

Now let us imagine the child answering to the other voice and deciding against the wishes of the family. She utters the most courageous, the most difficult, yet withal the simplest word in all languages—the little word No. The family is thrown into a state of consternation at her refusal, abuses the child for her faithlessness and cowardice, her lack of love and sympathy and understanding. But the child knows better. She knows that in her freedom and independence only can she best work, help, and keep the love and good-will of every member of the family. Time goes on. The child waxes strong. The little family quarrels that constantly occur here and there she ignores, as she understands so well that as she expects her rights and

ideals, customs and independence to be recognized and respected by others, so does she recognize and respect those of her brothers and sisters and parents. She refuses to interfere and lets them alone. Only when the struggles between them become too frequent and destructive, the abuses too severe and inhuman, the problems too difficult to solve, and the principle of right is threatened, does she freely and gladly give her help, advice, and strength—reserving to herself, however, the decision, with the help of the Higher Power above, on which side to serve and in how great a degree she believes it is wisest and best to help. She has truly become a source of strength—not only to herself, but to her entire family, for they realize that this young child cannot be swayed by material gain nor bound by false and old promises. She has come into her own, and her life is full of good works.

Thank God that America is remaining true to herself, is resisting the enemy within her gates, and has shown the courage and the firmness to say No. Thank God that she is keeping true to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, the very flesh and blood of her existence. All praise be given her that she has *not* sold her birthright!

"If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity."

America still is, and let us hope always will be, the land of the free and the home of the brave, and by the grace and help of our Heavenly Father become a blessing and a light to all the world.

Thanksgiving Day, 1919.

JUSTICE WITH MERCY

NOW that America has firmly established her liberty and is free from all alliances so foreign to her nature, she realizes that there are two kinds of liberties—one that is anarchistic and the other which conforms to law and order. John Winthrop expressed this thought in 1645, as follows: "There is a twofold liberty—natural (I mean as our nature is now corrupt) and civil or federal. The first is . . . liberty to evil as well as to good . . . and cannot endure the least restraint of the most just authority. . . . This is that great enemy of truth and peace . . . which all the ordinances of God are bent against. . . . The other kind of liberty . . . civil or federal . . . is the proper end and object of authority . . . and it is liberty to that only which is good, just and honest."

Now this liberty of justice and honesty and rightness, which is the foundation and ideal of the common law, is upheld and practiced in an institution called the Court of Justice. A court of justice is not a league, alliance, association, or club, wherein one becomes a member only by invitation, by election, or by paying a sum of money, or one is left out of it altogether; but it is an institution open and free to all, where all are on the same basis with one another. Whenever this liberty is crossed by man and is interfered with by his becoming too powerful and aggressive, or selfish, cruel, and dangerous for the welfare of all, he is brought before the court of justice for punishment or correction, and is judged according to the misdemeanor. Why cannot there be established among nations the same laws, the same morals, as in communities, families, and individuals? Why cannot there be established an International Court of Justice among them, where firm, courageous justice should be executed when necessary, remembering always, however,

that the result is often better and more lasting when justice is tempered with mercy.

Here let me recall a story which was told me about William McKinley during the time he was President of the United States of America. President McKinley was much disturbed and distressed as to America's right attitude and action in the Orient after the United States, with the European powers, had helped China to crush the Boxer uprising. The European powers were for retribution and desired territory from China, but this was in direct opposition to America's ideals and principles, and diplomatic relations had become somewhat strained. Enlightenment came to the President one morning by his recalling these words: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Then and there he made these words his guide, and with the assistance of his able Secretary of State, John Hay, started the most disinterested, high-minded, and just diplomatic dealings among the nations that the world has ever seen. This course America has steadily followed until, unfortunately for herself and the world, she failed in 1919. The noble words that had been William McKinley's guide were forgotten at the Peace Conference at Versailles, and our President, Woodrow Wilson, tragically failed in moral courage to practice what he preached when the crucial test came. Through this moral weakness, and through hatred, revenge, selfishness, and a peculiarly strange obsession of fear, the Allies took the road of intolerance, which was so strangely different from what during their dark hours of possible defeat and at the Armistice they had promised themselves to do. They had subtly become like unto their enemy whom they had defeated; and by their intolerance, injustice, and lack of understanding, a great mental change is gradually taking place in Europe, whereby the real transgressor is becoming the aggrieved, the original culprit posing as a martyr. Also, a feeling of rebellion, recklessness and despair is noticeable among the defeated nations, whereas had mercy and understanding been shown by the Allies, a spirit

of repentance, of reparation, and a willingness to cooperate in their just demands would probably have been the result.

Just as in a community the people are all equal before the law, but not the same, so in this world there are many nations which should be equal before the law, however unlike they may be. Each family lives its own life, is free and independent, follows its own customs, habits, and thoughts, as do nations. The families go their own way, harmoniously cooperating with each other without dreaming or desiring to make other families like unto themselves, and so should nations do. They should acknowledge each other and respect each other, without any idea of Prussianizing, Anglicizing, or Americanizing the world, or demanding that all be either monarchies or democracies.

To obtain and retain this liberty or freedom, let there be established an International Court of Justice—a tribunal where judges sit all the time to discuss, define, arbitrate, and judge on all the national problems that arise—where wrongs can be righted, injustice can be corrected, and difficulties through misunderstandings can be adjusted. And just as a family or individual which becomes too forceful, selfish and dangerous is punished or put aside for safety or correction, so in the case of a nation should it be warned, and if it heeds not the warning be put aside, receive the sentence of contempt of court, and dealings with it for awhile be abandoned until it learns to understand its wrong and correct its error. These international judges should be chosen by their respective nations, and they among themselves should choose a chairman to preside over the court; these judges and their chairman to act for a number of years and at different intervals be replaced by others of their own nations.

Decisions of the Court of Justice are upheld by the people and individuals, but if the offender refuses to conform thereto, the police and law officials, as servants and protectors of the people and communities, are employed to uphold and keep the law and order; so the same should be done in regard to the decisions of the International Court of Jus-

tice. These should be upheld by all nations, and if an offending nation or nations refuses to abide thereto, the regular army and navy of the nation or nations which has been given that right by the Court, should be employed to uphold and keep the law and order. Regular armies and navies are servants and protectors of nations just as are the police and law officials servants and protectors of the people and communities. Of course, it should not be expected that this International Court would be perfect or ideal, and that mistakes might not be made in its final decisions, but it would still be a long step toward establishing better cooperation, and thereby bring us nearer on the way to a more permanent peace—to more upright and just thoughts and dealings among men. In this way only can there be explained and executed to the best of our human ability, the common law and the international law for all, and true liberty be upheld, which will become the basis for a better and more harmonious understanding and relationship. For be it remembered that true justice is balanced with understanding. Let there also be inscribed in this international court chamber, and memorized by every human heart, those ever memorable and unforgettable words:

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown:
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings,
But mercy is above this sceptred sway:
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice."

April 14, 1920.

CONCLUSION

SINCE the writing of this last essay many events have happened which should show us how very little the world is yet ready to receive and to put into practice so great an idea as a true League of Nations, which should imply unity and harmony in principle and purpose among all yet variety in expressing it. Such a harmonious concert of nations is as yet far removed in the future as it is among all individuals. But there is no reason for despair.

We have thankfully outgrown the age of infancy and childhood, have laboriously learned the A B C's of civilization. Now we are in the age of growing, unfolding and developing youth, with the agonizing growing pains of the last war still upon us, still remembered, but the full maturity of wisdom and understanding that only experience and age can bring is still in the dim future—our X Y Z's are yet to be learned. So with that ideal—League of Nations. There are many stepping-stones to be trod, many rungs on the ladder to be climbed, before we can hope to realize it. It is a slow growth, and must and cannot be forced; rather is it the goal and not the means toward which the nations constantly should strive. To attain this there must be more justice actively practiced in the world; the Golden Rule more frequently applied; and greater understanding and wisdom be acquired by the means of international conferences on economic questions, on financial issues, on industrial situations, on racial differences, etc.—all beginnings and means toward establishing that harmonious cooperation without the loss of any national freedom. Every country internally and politically and nationally should be free to lead its own life, develop its own character for which it has been created. There must be no uniformity of nations, which would mean stagnation and death.

And here let me say how disappointed I am that a plan for an International Court of Justice has been drawn up

based upon the present Covenant, so-called League of Nations. Any conference, any court of justice based on such a foundation is built upon sand, and cannot bear good and lasting fruit. This Covenant is so intertwined with the unhappy, retrogressive Peace Treaty of Versailles, is so at one with it, that it is like the marrying of the lamb with the beast, with the latter the dominating influence. No; anything based on these two unfortunate covenants must in time fail.

Was not Washington, unconsciously perhaps, a prophet, divinely inspired to warn his countrymen against this possible temptation, this danger of losing their freedom? Was there not, perhaps, a divine intent that created America as she is, bound on both sides by vast expanse of ocean, forever separate, geographically and physically, from Europe, Asia and Africa, unhampered by their border difficulties, their intrigues and dangers caused thereby? America free, not isolated, but always ready in her freedom and independence to aid whoever needs her help, and when their cause is just. Is not that, perhaps, her mission, her work upon this globe? The United States of America is the one country which is religiously free, where all can worship God in their various ways and ceremonies. Why should she not remain politically and nationally free, also?

September 30, 1920.

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